

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 AID-05 EB-08 OMB-01 TRSE-00

AGRE-00 ABF-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 /082 W

-----222050Z 060466 /46

R 220700Z APR 77

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8073

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMCONSUL UDORN

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EFIN AFIN ALOW EIND LA

SUBJECT: LAO MARKET CONDITIONS

REF VIENTIANE 0432

1. REACTING TO THE RESISTANCE ELEMENT OCCUPATION OF A BORDER ISLAND DURING THE FIRST WEEK OF APRIL, VIENTIANE AUTHORITIES INSTRUCTED THE POPULATION APRIL 7 TO STORE FOOD ITEMS IN CASE OF WAR. BEFORE THE INCIDENT EMBASSY'S WEEKLY MARKET SURVEYS SHOWED THAT THE PRICES OF ALL QUALITIES OF WHITE RICE STEADILY ROSE SINCE PRICES OF REFTEL. AFTER THE INCIDENT, HOWEVER, RICE MERCHANTS CLAIMED FARMERS WERE MORE RELUCTANT TO SELL THEIR RICE STOCKS, BOOSTING PRICES EVEN HIGHER.

2. EMBASSY MARKET SURVEY OF APRIL 20 SHOWED THE PRICE OF RICE INCREASED FROM THAT OF MARCH 2, REPORTED REFTEL.

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FIRST, SECOND AND THIRD QUALITY WHITE RICE INCREASED FROM 200, 150 AND 100 TO 350, 300 AND 200 KIP PER KILO RESPECTIVELY. FIRST QUALITY GLUTINOUS RICE THAT SOLD FOR 100 KIP PER KILO MARCH 2 WAS NOT AVAILABLE APRIL 20 BUT SECOND QUALITY INCREASED FROM 80 TO 130 AND THIRD QUALITY WAS AVAILABLE FOR 80 KIP PER KILO ON APRIL 20.

3. WITH THE COMING OF THE DRY SEASON THE PRICES FOR NEARLY ALL TYPES OF VEGETABLES AND FRUITS INCREASED. THE PRICE OF CUCUMBERS ROSE FROM 100 TO 250, GREEN BEANS FROM 200 TO 300, ENDIVE FROM 400 TO 700, GREEN ONIONS FROM 400 TO 500, CABBAGE, TOMATOS AND LETTUCE FROM 150 TO 300, PAPAYA FROM 300 TO 500, AND BANANAS FROM 100 TO 150 KIP PER KILO.

4. THE FREE MARKET PRICES OF SUGAR, EGGS, COFFEE AND MILK INCREASED GREATLY, PERHAPS REFLECTING THEIR SHORT SUPPLY IN THE GOVERNMENT STORES BECAUSE OF THE INSTRUCTION TO STOCKPILE FOOD ITEMS IN HOMES. SUGAR INCREASED FROM 300 TO 750 AND COFFEE FROM 1000 TO 1500 KIP PER KILO, EGGS FROM 900 TO 1200 KIP PER 10 EGGS, AND SWEET MILK FROM 250 TO 450 KIP PER CAN.

5. THE PRICES OF PORK, BEEF, AND BUFFALO MEAT REMAINED ABOUT THE SAME ALTHOUGH CHICKEN AND DUCK INCREASED FROM 1200 EACH TO 1800 AND 1700 KIP PER KILO RESPECITVELY.

6. THE BLACK MARKET RATE FOR A DOLLAR FELL FROM 1440 KIP MARCH 2 TO 1370 KIP APRIL 20.
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